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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

25X1A

COUNTRY Ecuador

SUBJECT Description of Roads and Railroads

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1. About 85% of Ecuador's roads are passable only from April to January. These have been constructed by clearing a path with a bulldozer, and they are not properly maintained. Narrowness of urban streets restricts large vehicles. Rural highway markers are not generally used.

2. The roads described below are listed as numbered on the map [redacted] 25X1X

25X1X [redacted]

(1) The 65-km paved road from Progreso to Salinas. It has a 10-inch gravel and stone base with a natural sand asphalt surface about one-half inch thick. It will support a 10-thousand-lb wheel load. As of 1953, four or five short-span wooden bridges remained in this section; the others were of concrete and steel design for H-15 loading. This road runs near the Salinas airfield, the only Ecuadoran field that can accommodate planes requiring a runway of more than one mile.

(2) The Progreso Guayaquil Highway, asphalt over a gravel base of about six inches. Although the road is 18 feet wide and has steel and concrete bridges and culverts, it is not a well-built highway.

(3) The Progreso-Playa Highway, 30 km of good asphalt highway capable of handling a 10-thousand-lb wheel load.

(4) Guayaquil north to the Quevedo-Manta Road. About half of this 115-km stretch is asphalt-surfaced and the entire section is all-weather and can handle a 10-thousand-lb wheel load. At km 40, a German (Federal Republic) contract is building a 600-foot suspension bridge across the Río Daule to replace the 100-ton ferry.

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(5) The Quevedo-Manta Highway, about 25% of which is asphalt-surfaced. Of modern design and construction, it should be finished in 1955.

(6) The Quevedo-Latacunga Road. This all-weather road is of gravel and stone, part being cobblestone. Construction is not modern and speed is restricted.

(7) The Pan American Highway. This is of cobblestone except for short stretches of native gravel and stone on its route from Tulcán near the Colombian border through Ibarra, Quito, Latacunga, Riobamba and Azogues to Cuenca and 30 km beyond. The road is all-weather but speed is restricted. The cobblestone stretches are 18 ft wide but elsewhere in some sections there is one-lane traffic. An Ecuadoran contractor is building the highway through to the Peruvian border, with the job scheduled for completion in 1955. The highway then will be the only north-south road traversing the country.

(8) The Quito-Esmeraldas Road. About 60% is all-weather cobblestone or gravel and stone. A French firm is building the Quito-Esmeraldas Railroad through the same general area.

3. The railroad from Durán, across the Río Guayas from Guayaquil, to Quito needs repairs and new rolling stock. A Diesel locomotive can handle only four or five cars on the Andean switchbacks. About US$30 million would be needed to modernize the railroad.

4. The Guayaquil-Salinas Railroad has been abandoned because the rolling stock and tracks wore out.

[Available on loan from CIA Map Library is a map of Ecuador titled "Sistema Fundamental de Carreteras" published by the Guayas Comite Ejecutivo de Vialidad; scale: 1:1,000,000; map call No. 91213-R. To borrow, call Code 143, ext 2596.]

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